

# **Christian Science Committee on Publication**

## **F O R C O N N E C T I C U T**

### **REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT**

#### **HB5760An Act Concerning Prevention Strategies for Vision Problems in Young Children**

February 26, 2007

The Christian Science Committee on Publication for Connecticut respectfully requests that House Bill 5760 be amended as follows:

#### **ADD a religious accommodation to read:**

**"The provisions of this Act shall not require any pupil to undergo vision examination whose parent or guardian objects to such examination, on religious grounds."**

#### **EXPLANATION**

- The Christian Science Committee on Publication acknowledges and admires the concern the legislators of Connecticut have for the readiness of our youngest citizens to learn. This important legislation also affects those citizens of Connecticut, including Christian Scientists, who may choose to rely on a religious non-medical method of healing.
- This amendment would clarify that parents or guardians who, as an alternative to vision examination, actively and responsibly rely on a preventive and curative religious non-medical method of healing for their children may choose not to have their children undergo vision examination.
- Christian Science is one of the religious non-medical forms of treatment that relies on spiritual means through prayer to heal and prevent illness, injuries and other conditions. In Connecticut, individuals have chosen Christian Science treatment and care for healing for more than a century. The experience of those practicing Christian Science is that this healing method has both preventative and curative effects. The application of this religious non-medical method of healing does not involve any type of medical examination or testing.
- In the Christian Science tradition of Christian healing and health care, identity is based on man as the creation of God, who is only good and who lovingly preserves and maintains His/Her entire creation.
- The testing proposed in this bill would contradict this foundational premise of Christian Science practice, and even interfere with prayer-based healing.
- Parents who rely on prayer or spiritual means for healing should be allowed to object to vision examination for the benefit of their children. A similar religious accommodation currently exists at Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-208 relative to health assessments of pupils for school enrollment.

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